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Appl. No.: 10/687,561
Response dated May 3, 2006
Reply to Office Action of June 14, 2005

REMARKS

This is in response to the Office Action dated June 14, 2005. Because of Hurricane Katrina, the Patent and Trademark Office has extended the time for response until May 3, 2006.

The Examiner relies primarily upon the 52 foot SRC configuration publication in rejecting the claims. Certain claims are rejected as anticipated by Mills (see paragraphs 2 and 3 of the Office Action). Applicant has amended independent claims 1 and 24. It is submitted that the dependent claims that depend therefrom are now allowable. Those claims that depend from claim 1 include claims 2-23. Those claims that depend from claim 24 include claims 25-66. Claim 3 has been canceled.

The present invention provides a specially configured rescue boat that enables pilots of the boat to perform rescues in a much safer manner than the prior art relied upon by the Examiner. It is submitted that the claims as amended are not suggested nor rendered obvious by the art of record.

The Examiner relies primarily upon the 52 foot SRC configuration publication in rejecting claim 1. The rescue wells do not extend to the front of the pilot house and to the rear of the pilot house as claimed. If the 52 foot SRC configuration pilot house is deemed to include the galley/mess area, the claims are not met. In such a case, the rescue wells do not extend in front of the port and starboard pilot seats that are clearly shown in the plan view for the 52 foot SRC. Additionally, if the pilot house is deemed to not include the galley/mess area for the 52 foot SRC configuration, neither of the rescue wells extends at all to the pilot house.

The 52 foot SRC configuration provides an enlarged area that includes a pilot house having port and starboard chairs that are well in front of the rescue wells and a galley/mess area that extends to and is substantially coincident with the rescue wells. This presents a problem because it is important during the rescue of a man overboard that the pilot be able to view the rescue wells so as not to run over the person to be rescued. The only members of the crew that will be able to see a swimmer next to the rescue well in the 52 foot SRC configuration would be the cook in the galley, a person not able to control the boat from one of the pilot seats.

In claim 1 as amended, applicant additionally claims a stern deck area that is behind the pilot house. This deck area is important because it enables a rescued person to be airlifted from

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the vessel if that person is badly injured. Applicant claims that this rear deck area is substantially unobstructed and begins at the rear of the pilot house. As shown in the elevation view of the 52 foot SRC configuration, there is no unobstructed deck area behind the pilot house. There is a very small deck area behind the galley. However, a very large tower carrying various equipment, radar and antennas would seriously interfere with a cable that was being lowered from a helicopter to a litter on the deck. The 52 foot SRC configuration does not meet the claim restrictions of amended claim 1.

Regarding claim 24, the Examiner indicates that this claim is anticipated by Mills. Claim 24 has been amended to include a pilot house having multiple pilot seats including port and starboard pilot seats and wherein the stern deck area extends from the pilot house to the fantail. No such structure is seen in Mills nor is it suggested.

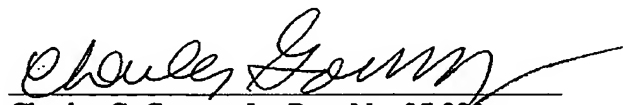
In view of the claim amendments and comments, it is submitted that the independent claims 1 and 24 are now in condition for allowance. Therefore, each of the claims that depends from either claim 1 or claim 24 is believed allowable.

Should the Examiner feel that a telephone conference would advance the prosecution of this application, he is encouraged to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Applicant respectfully petitions the Commissioner for any extension of time necessary to render this paper timely.

Please charge any additional fees due or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-0694.

Respectfully submitted,


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